REMARKS

Applicant proposes amending claims 1, 11, 18, and 21 to indicate that the present invention provides to a user continuous updates to product information displayed at the user's computer and that the updated product information is selected according to the same search parameters that the user provided in his search request for product information. Specifically, the amended claims indicate that the search parameter is used to search the database to select product information as well to select updated product information. As a result, the user is not required to submit the same search request multiple times in order to obtain the most current product information.

Telephone Interview

On January 25, 2004, Applicant's representative conducted a telephone interview with Supervisory Examiner Thomas and Examiner Pass to discuss the present application. Applicant appreciated the opportunity to discuss the present application with the Examiners. During the telephone interview, it was suggested that Applicant amend the pending claims to indicate more clearly how the request and related search parameter is used to select updated product information. It was also suggested that Applicant indicate where in the specification support for the amended claims may be found. No agreement regarding proposed amendments to the claims was reached.

During the discussions, it was suggested that Applicant amend the claims to distinguish between an initial request and a subsequent request. However, the relevant requests that are made by the computer user are a search request and a continuous update request. The search request comprises search parameters for searching the

database. If the user requests continuous updates to product information, updated product information is selected from the database and transmitted to the user when new product information is received from merchant computers. Applicant has amended the claims to distinguish between a search request and a request for continuous updates to product information.

Comments under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The independent claims of the present application have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on the Suzuki, Shavit, and King references.

The Suzuki reference teaches an integrated database that comprises data from multiple vendor or business sources. The Shavit reference teaches interactive, online communications between computer users and systems such that users can submit requests for information and receive responses instantaneously (e.g., providing confirmations, quotations, etc.). The system supports a continuous flow of communications between computers, and therefore, facilitates business transactions between parties. The Shavit reference also teaches that portions of databases (and in some cases complete databases) are replicated at various computer systems for local access. The databases are updated frequently to keep information current. Finally, the King reference teaches a system that supports product comparisons. King also teaches replication of databases to local computer systems and updating of those databases.

Applicant has amended the claims to indicate that a user's search parameters from a search request are used to search a database for product information and to search the database for updates to the product information. The search parameters are

used for selected of updated product information from the database. First, the product information responsive to the search request is transmitted to the user's computer. The user may submit a request to receive continuous updates to product information transmitted to the user's computer in response to the search request. If a user has requested continuous updates, the host computer determines whether product information in the database relevant to the search request has been updated. If updated product information is present in the database, the host computer assimilates the updated product information and transmits it to the user. As a result, the user receives updated product information that is relevant to the search parameters of the search request. The user can submit the search request once and then receive continuous updates to the product information that are relevant to the search request.

The prior art teaches interactive, online communications as well as updating of information in databases. However, there is no connection between the database updates and the interactive, online communications. Whether a user receives the most current information depends upon when the search request is submitted and when the database was last updated. If the search request is submitted shortly after a database update, the user receives the most current information. If the search request is submitted just before a database update, the user receives obsolete information. The prior art does not teach the use of search parameters from a search request to provide product information and to provide continuous updates to the product information.

Support for the claims as amended is found in several passages in the specification. Support for claim amendments directed to continuous updates to product information at the user's computer is found the following passages:

Pg. 1, II. 6-7:   a computer system that enables a user to have real time access to product/service information and direct product/service ordering from multiple merchants

Pg, 3, II. 10-11:   the present invention is designed to provide a user with real time product/service information, from a variety of merchants

Pg. 3, II. 17-18:   value added software is provided at the network to assimilate the data collected from various and multiple merchants in real time

Pg. 5, II. 14-16:   the software of the present invention can quickly generate a new product/service presentation as the data changes from the merchants in real time

Pg. 6, II. 18-20:   preferably, the network database(s) receives updated information in real time from the various merchants as the information is updated

Pg. 9, II. 7-9:   the network host, through network software, accesses the network database(s) that is updated in real time from the merchants and retrieves the requested information

Pg. 9, II. 12-15:   optionally, the user may request real time updates of the requested information. Then, the information on the user's computer is continuously updated as the information received from the merchants by the network host is updated

Pg. 10, II. 1-3:   the user may access the information instantaneously from the various merchants by a series of two-way communication paths existing between the user's personal computer, a network host, the merchant, and an optional switch

Support for claim amendments directed to a user's search request and a request

for continuous updates is provided in the following passages:

Pg. 6, II. 12-13:   the user then makes a request for product/service information currently residing in the network

database

Pg. 8, II: 19-21:   the user 60 simply uses his computer and through the network 62 is enabled to obtain product/service information from the merchant in real time

Pg. 9, II. 1-3:   the user inputs request parameters to the interface for a search. For instance, the user may request information regarding desktop personal microcomputers that have a 486 or higher processor

Pg. 9, II. 6-7:   the interface formats these search parameters and transmits the request to the network host

Pg. 9, II. 7-9:   the network host, through the network software, accesses the network database(s) that is updated in real time from the merchants and retrieves the request information

Pg. 9, II. 12-15:   optionally, the user may request real time updates of the requested information. Then, the information on the user's computer is continuously updated as the information received from the merchants by the network host is updated

Pg. 9, II. 19-20:   the present invention is unique for several reasons, but primarily, it provides one-stop service with which a user at a personal computer, may shop on-line using real time product/service information

Applicant respectfully submits that none of the references cited by the Examiner teach or suggest transmission of updates to product information at a customer's computer based on a single search request. Applicant's invention represents a significant improvement over the prior art because information regarding a variety of products and services may be obtained, and more importantly updated, as updates to the product information are transmitted from the merchants' computer to the network

database and from the network host computer to the user's computer. Applicant respectfully submits the amended claims patentably define the present invention.

Respectfully submitted,

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